



Understanding What England Church Are Finding Them Online

Mark E. Gardner, Reference Consultant, A.G.

Gardnerme@ldschurch.org

21 October 2015

The Family History Library has a great collection of different record types for England Church Records. The records are in many different forms of books, microfilm, microfiche, compact discs, and now digital images on many different websites. The church records with the best access of information are those that contain baptism, marriage, and burial entries.

This class will focus on what these church records are for baptism, marriage, and burial records and how to access them online with indexes and images.

Church of England

Church records that exist today for baptism, marriage, and burial start as early as 1538 for parish registers and 1597-1900 for Bishop Transcripts. Indexes and images of these two record groups are very important to learn how to use. Your success will depend upon understanding where these records are indexed online and completeness. Understanding research principals will help in determining if you have located the correct person. Some websites are also starting to add other parish chest records to the collections from the Church of England.

Non Church of England (Non-Conformist)

Non-conformist records exist and are available online pre-1837. Post 30 June 1837 church records may be more difficult to find online. Local record offices maybe consulted to find these records or the Familysearch catalog. A great source to help in locating a record other than a church record starting on 1 July 1837 are the Civil Registration records of Birth, Marriage, and Death certificates. The marriage certificates will show religion and place the marriage was performed.

Online Church Records

The best way to access online church records are through the websites of FamilySearch, Ancestry, Findmypast, The Genealogist, FreeReg, and Online Parish Clerks. Other ways to locate church records are through local repository catalogs and Genuki which is a website for Genealogy in United Kingdom and Ireland. There are smaller websites that can contain extracts or even complete transcriptions of parish register type entries. Try an online search engine search of the specific church and see what records can be located.

Following are some very good websites to access church records. The websites that are commercial or have the most information are continually adding more indexes and images to their holdings to make available to their users.

Websites with multiple county church record information

These websites are continually updated with church record information of baptisms, marriages, and burials.

www.familysearch.org

Member and non-member access

Use Find and Search to find record information

Indexes and images. Catalog can now be used to see images.

Catalog also can access and understand church record information. What exists!

Indexes to Non-Conformist records pre-1837.

www.ancestry.com

Indexes and Images to Church Records. Collections for cities and counties: Birmingham, Bristol, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Lancashire, Liverpool London, Manchester, Middlesex, Northamptonshire 1813-1900, Surrey, Warwickshire, West Yorkshire.

Dorset parish chest records

Non-Conformist (England & Wales)

Other County Indexes

www.findmypast.co.uk

Non-conformist

Methodist

Church of England Collections for cities and counties: Berkshire, Bristol, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cornwall, Derbyshire, Devon, Durham, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Lincolnshire, Middlesex, Northumberland, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Somersetshire, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Warwickshire, Westminster, Wiltshire. Wales as it borders England.

www.thegenealogist.co.uk

Many counties in England different ways to access the indexes or transcribed records. Gold edition available for free at The Family History Library. Diamond edition more expensive, but much more access to indexed church records. Good coverage for many English counties. They have www.bmdregisters.co.uk which is the best indexed database for non-conformist records for England.

www.freereg.org.uk

All counties listed, but varies from county to county to what has been indexed. Transcribed indexes only.

www.geneuki.org.uk

Website shows information county by county in the British Isles and what church records may have been indexed. Incomplete, but very helpful website for genealogical information and all types of records. Church record indexes and information can be accessed.

Local Family History Societies and County Record Offices with church record information

Family History Societies. Online websites.

Federation of Family History Societies.

Each county should have a record office and Family History Society

They produce indexes to church records. See their websites either by city, county or region.

They can have direct information of baptisms, marriages and burials on their websites. They may sell complete or partial county record information.

Publications in the Family History Library.

Best and most complete indexes.

Examples:

Buckinghamshire

<https://apps2.buckscc.gov.uk/eCommerce/UserError.aspx>

Essex

<http://seax.essexcc.gov.uk/>

Lincolnshire

<http://www.lincstothepast.com/home/>

How to locate Church Records

Each County can have their own Record Office or towns can have a local library with Church records. For finding local church records, contact the county record office, local library or the Church and they can tell you where to find Church records. Many of the local parish churches will have information about their record holdings. Many churches have a website and contact information.

Websites with county wide indexed church record information

These county wide transcribed indexes of Church of England records are for baptism, marriage, and burial information from the local minister (parish clerks) on a county by county basis.

Online Parish Clerks

England

http://www.ukbmd.org.uk/online_parish_clerk

Cornwall

<http://cornwall-opc.org/>

Devon

<http://genuki.cs.ncl.ac.uk/DEV/OPCproject.html>

Dorset

<http://www.opcdorset.org/>

Essex

<http://essex-opc.org.uk/>

Hampshire

<http://www.knightroots.co.uk/>

Kent

<http://kent-opc.org/>

Lancashire

<http://www.lan-opc.org.uk/>

Somerset

<http://wsom-opc.org.uk/>

Sussex

<http://www.sussex-opc.org/>